

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, February 27t, 2004*

## CHIEF UPDATES COUNCIL ON PSA RESTRUCTURING PLAN

Chief Ramsey this week updated the DC Council's Judiciary Committee on the MPDC's plans to restructure the city's Police Service Areas (PSAs) and provided Councilmembers with the proposed officer staffing levels for the new PSAs. The plan to restructure the PSAs in order to improve police performance was first presented to the public at Mayor Williams's Crime Forum II in May 2003. Since then, the MPDC has solicited and received input on the plan from community leaders and members, and the Department has made several adjustments based on those comments. The current plan calls for reducing the number of PSAs from 83 to 43, and adjusting some police district boundaries as well. Chief Ramsey said the lower number of PSAs will give officials greater flexibility in how they staff neighborhood patrols. Improved leadership on each of the PSAs and stronger community policing partnerships among police, other city agencies and residents are also anticipated benefits of the plan. The Chief stressed that while every PSA would receive a minimum of 21 officers to cover all three shifts, PSAs with greater demands for service will receive more officers. For example, the new PSA 101, which includes the Sursum Corda area of Northwest, will have 95 officers at the time of the rollout, and 109 officers when the Department is fully staffed at 3,800 officers. The Chief explained the formula for determining the number of officers per PSA; the formula factors in dispatched Priority One calls for service and violent and property crimes.

① The proposed implementation date for the new PSAs is May 1, 2004. Read the Chief's complete statement to the Committee at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/stmts/2004/02/022404.shtm>

① For more information, including the boundaries of the 43 proposed new PSAs, go to:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/PSAs\\_proposed.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/PSAs_proposed.shtm)

① For a spreadsheet (in PDF) showing the proposed staffing levels for each PSA and the factors used in the staffing formula, click on:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/Matrix10\\_Hearing\\_022304.pdf](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/Matrix10_Hearing_022304.pdf)

## MPDC ACTIVATES NATION'S FIRST STATIONARY PHOTO RADAR SPEEDING REDUCTION CAMERA

In its continuing efforts to reduce speeding-related traffic crashes in the District, the MPDC this week activated a "fixed-site" photo radar camera in the 600 block of Florida Avenue, NE—the first such use of the technology in North America. Over the next 30 days, only warning notices will be issued to drivers who are caught speeding by the stationary photo radar system. The warnings are part of a campaign to educate motorists about the dangers of speeding and the Department's crackdown on this dangerous behavior using photo radar. Beginning March 27, 2004, aggressive speeders caught by the fixed-site camera will receive Notices of Infraction in the mail. While photo-enforced violations do not carry points, the fines for speeding range up to \$200 per violation. Ramsey said the location of the stationary unit was selected, in part, because of the traffic safety benefits to the students, staff and faculty of Gallaudet University, which is adjacent to the Florida Avenue location. He also cited chronic problems with speeding in that area, including three speeding-related fatalities in recent years in the 500 and 600 blocks of Florida Avenue, NE. The stationary photo radar system is almost identical to the technology used in the mobile photo radar vehicles deployed by the MPD since July 2001. The District's automated enforcement program is provided at no cost to District taxpayers, with all expenses covered by the fines collected from violators.

① Read the news release announcing the photo radar expansion at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2589>

① For information describing the operation of photo radar – both the mobile cameras and the new fixed site – click on:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedoperation.shtm>

① Since the summer of 2001, the MPDC has used the photo radar speeding reduction technology in six specially equipped vehicles that are deployed in different parts of the city. The results have been a dramatic reduction in aggressive speeding. Details at:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults\\_text.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults_text.shtm)

## CHIEF RAMSEY JOINS CONGRESSWOMAN NORTON AND MAYOR WILLIAMS IN PRESSING CONGRESS TO RETAIN DC GUN LAW

At the request of DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, this week Mayor Anthony Williams and Chief Ramsey met with Utah Senator Orrin Hatch to ask that he agree not press an amendment that would repeal the city's handgun ban. Norton said she was particularly concerned that the Hatch amendment could go to the Senate floor for a vote without going through the normal committee process, which would allow District officials to testify in support of DC's strong gun laws. The repeal of the handgun ban could be attached to S. 1805, a bill that would limit the legal liability of gun manufacturers, distributors and dealers when a firearm is used in a crime. The Senate began debating the bill this past week. Chief Ramsey noted that firearms are already used in more than 75 percent of the homicides in DC and other big cities, including New York and Chicago which have handgun laws similar to DC's. He said that to control crime, the city needs fewer – not more – handguns in homes and on the streets. The Senator's reason for the measure is self-protection, but data show that each year guns in the home leave thousands of Americans killed in family and acquaintance quarrels, domestic violence and suicides, Norton said. Children are particularly vulnerable to accidental shootings in homes that have guns.

## EIGHTEEN NEW OFFICERS HITTING THE STREETS

Eighteen new police officers are hitting the streets of DC, after being sworn in by Chief Ramsey during graduation ceremonies this past week. Prior to receiving their badges, the 18 new officers completed approximately six months of academic, physical and tactical training at the MPDC's Maurice T. Turner Jr., Institute of Police Science. All 18 of the new officers are being assigned to uniformed neighborhood PSA (Police Service Area) patrols in the seven police districts. Friday's graduation ceremony, held at the National Zoo Auditorium in Northwest DC, was one of several officer graduations planned over the next few months, as the MPDC continues to build toward its goal of 3,800 officers. Mayor Williams, with support from the DC Council, has made increasing the number of MPDC officers a top priority of his public safety agenda.

## NEWS & NOTES

**"Ask the Chief" on WTOP.** Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls and emails during his monthly appearance on "Ask the Chief" on WTOP radio, on Wednesday, March 3, from 10-11 am.

**MPDC Performance Hearing.** DC Council Judiciary Committee Chair Kathy Patterson has scheduled a hearing on the MPDC's performance during fiscal year 2003 and year-to-date for fiscal 2004. The hearing is scheduled for Monday, March 1, at 3 pm in the Council chambers. Chief Ramsey will testify.

**New Traffic and Pedestrian Signals.** Mayor Williams this week launched the second phase of the citywide project to replace old incandescent traffic lights with more efficient traffic LEDs (light emitting diodes) and install countdown pedestrian signals at selected crosswalks. Details at [http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view.asp?a=1252&q=602528&ddotNav\\_GID=1610](http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view.asp?a=1252&q=602528&ddotNav_GID=1610)

**Drug Free Zones.** The MPDC is enforcing DC's anti-loitering law this weekend in a designated drug free zone in PSA 302 in Northwest. Additional drug free zones are planned for the coming weeks. Details on this program at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/drugfreezone.shtm>

① For more information on the DC officials' action to protect the District's handgun ban, go to:

<http://www.norton.house.gov/issues2.cfm?id=7976>

① Congresswoman Norton said DC was so successful in getting many guns out of homes with its "Gun Buy-Back" program in 1999 and 2000, that she recently introduced a bill to do the same nationwide. For information on DC's previous Gun Buy-Backs, visit:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/programs/buyback.shtm>

① Details on DC's gun laws, as well as gun safety tips for parents and children, can be found at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/gunsafety.shtm>

① To learn more about career opportunities in the MPDC, and to apply online, visit:

<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtm>

### DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 2/27/04)

- 2004: 28
- 2003: 34
- % Change: -17.6%
- Closure Rate: 75.0% (21 closures)

Adult Arrests (week end. 2/21/04)

- Total: 831
- Drugs: 156
- Homicide: 4
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 15
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 32

Firearm Recoveries (as of 2/24/04)

- February: 169
- 2004 Total: 369
- Traffic Fatalities (as of 2/27/04)
- 2004: 7
- 2003: 7
- % Change: Unchanged